




# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: April 6, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XII: Consideration of resolution (a) adding APN 2274-020-030 in Acquisition Area A (Camino de la Cumbre), APNs 4371-040-009, 4379-021-033, and 4379-024-038 in Acquisition Area B (Stone Canyon-Beverly Glen), and APN 5567-018-026 in Acquisition Area D (Laurel Canyon) to the District No. 1 the Final Engineers Report for Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1; (b) authorizing the use of said assessment district funds to acquire said parcels; (c) authorizing the acceptance of private donations to acquire said parcels, and (d) authorizing entering into agreements with adjacent property owners to be responsible for fuel modification on said parcels, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution (a) adding APN 2274-020-030 in Acquisition Area A (Camino de la Cumbre), APNs 4371-040-009, 4379-021-033, and 4379-024-038 in Acquisition Area B (Stone Canyon-Beverly Glen), and APN 5567-018-026 in Acquisition Area D (Laurel Canyon) to the District No. 1 the Final Engineers Report for Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1; (b) authorizing the use of said assessment district funds to acquire said parcels; (c) authorizing the acceptance of private donations to acquire said parcels, and (d) authorizing entering into agreements with adjacent property owners to be responsible for fuel modification on said parcels.

Background: The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has reserved the five subject tax defaulted parcels for purchase from the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector. These parcels are included in Chapter 8 Agreement Numbers 2358 and 2410.

The parcels were not included in the District No. 1 Final Engineer's Report. However, the low cost to acquire these parcels warrant their consideration of being added to the Engineer's Report. At their March 30, 2005 meeting the District No. 1 Citizens Oversight Committee adopted a resolution recommending that the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) add the five parcels to the District No. 1 Engineer's Report and determining that the expenditure of

Assessment District funds to acquire said properties is thereby consistent with the criteria and requirements established in said amended report.

The proposed action would add the five subject parcels to the Final Engineer's Report. The action would also authorize the use of assessment district funds to acquire the properties, the acceptance of donations towards the acquisitions, and entering into agreements with adjacent property owners to be responsible for fuel modification on said parcels.

The attached table lists the properties, their respective Chapter 8 agreement number, the cost of each parcel, number of acres, jurisdiction, and a brief note to identify their location. Each parcel is shown in the accompanying set of maps. The maps show the relationship between the parcels and the surrounding land.

#### **Area A Parcel**

APN 2274-020-030 is located in Acquisition Area A in the Camino de la Cumbre area that is sometimes referred to as Beverly Glen North. The parcel is an approximately 20-foot-wide sliver that lies between Camino de la Cumbre and Beverly Ridge Drive. The property is important for maintaining a wildlife corridor between Fossil Ridge Park and an adjacent MRCA-owned open space area-Oak Forest West (acquired by the Chapter 8 process) located to the west. That section of corridor is fundamental to the east-west habitat linkage along the north-facing slope of the Santa Monica Mountains. Twenty feet is nowhere close to an adequate wildlife corridor width, however, it is better than nothing if all the other parcels on the west (up slope) side of Camino de la Cumbre are developed. In addition, the entitlement process could require adjoining development to provide buffer area, to minimize fencing, or to eliminate any direct light spill into the area. Ideally, the two parcels to the north will be acquired in the near future. The 0.03 acre parcel costs \$1,396 plus minor administrative fees.

#### **Area B Parcels**

APNs 4371-040-009, 4379-021-033, and 4379-024-038 are located in Acquisition Area B in the Beverly Glen and Stone Canyon Reservoir areas. APN 4371-040-009 is located on the eastern slope of Beverly Glen in an area where at least one person is attempting to assemble numerous small lots for development. The parcel lies adjacent to City-owned open space and is located near two other small tax defaulted parcels recently acquired by the MRCA with Assessment District funds. The 0.59-acre parcel costs \$1,435 plus minor administrative fees.

APN 4379-021-033 is located at the corner of Beverly Glen Boulevard and a paper street just south of Perdido Lane. This parcel is important to the maintenance of wildlife movement across Beverly Glen Boulevard. City of Los Angeles-owned Beverly Glen Park is located directly across the busy, cross-mountain boulevard. It also preserves the viewshed along a major travel corridor. A small amount of annual brushing will be required. The 0.1-acre parcel costs \$5,681 plus minor administrative fees.

APN 4379-024-038 lies northeast of Stone Canyon Reservoir on the west side of Beverly Glen Boulevard. It is adjacent to City-owned open space and would extend the eastern reach of that protected block by a small increment. The 0.09-acre parcel costs \$1,176 plus minor administrative fees.

**Area D Parcel**

APN 5567-018-026 is located in Acquisition Area D between Lookout Mountain Avenue and Laurel Canyon Boulevard along Jewett Drive. The parcel is part of a multi-acre habitat patch that in turn is part of a serpentine habitat network that tie together large amounts of open space in the Laurel Canyon tributary watershed that drains at Lookout Mountain Avenue. The MRCA acquired a similar tax defaulted property along Oakden Drive (shown on attached map) with Assessment District funds. In and of themselves the habitat value of these parcels is not that significant. However, they form the seeds of larger protected habitat blocks that by nature need to start out small in these antiquated small lot subdivisions. The 0.07-acre parcel costs \$2,162 plus minor administrative fees. To the best of staff's knowledge, no annual brushing will be required based on the proximity of structures.

It is expected that the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector will send the bill to acquire the parcels as soon as ten months from now. The MRCA will then have 14 days to pay the bill once it is received. The funding for these parcels would come from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District One. All of the Acquisition Areas contain adequate fund balances.